TechMagic: AI Scandals, Scam Ads, Cannes Lions, DM9 and Creative Integrity

While TechMagic hosts Cathy Hackl and Lee Kebler are on vacation, we're spotlighting a must-hear episode of Adspeak by ADWEEK.

This week, Adspeak host and editor in chief Ryan Joe speaks with brands editor Rebecca Stewart and agencies reporter Audrey Kemp to unpack the fallout from this year's Cannes Lions, where AI-manipulated case studies led to major award revocations, most notably involving agency DM9. The trio also explores how AI is reshaping creative submissions, the ethics of "scam ads," and the introduction of new global integrity standards.

For marketers, creatives, and agency leaders, this episode offers an urgent look into the future of advertising awards in an AI-driven world. Come for the tech, stay for the magic!

Episode highlights:

Rethinking Award Integrity – Rebecca breaks down how Cannes Lions judging has evolved to prioritize both creativity and business impact. With more diverse juries and stringent requirements, submissions now demand robust case studies showing strategy, execution, and verified outcomes. As agencies pour millions into entries, the pressure is on to deliver storytelling that moves both hearts and metrics.

The DM9 AI Scandal – Audrey exposes how Brazilian agency DM9 doctored footage and misrepresented endorsements using AI to

win big at Cannes. The fallout triggered a wave of backlash, with multiple awards, including a Grand Prix, revoked. The scandal revealed deep flaws in the verification process and forced the industry to confront uncomfortable truths about AI ethics.

New Rules, Real Consequences — Cannes Lions has rolled out global integrity standards including AI detection, mandatory agency-client sign-offs, and human fact-checking. Offenders now face bans up to three years. Audrey and Rebecca explore how these sweeping changes mark a turning point for creative accountability, and what it means for agencies chasing recognition.

Creativity Meets Commerce — Rebecca reflects on the evolving award criteria, where innovation must be backed by commercial results. Great storytelling alone no longer suffices; juries now demand proof of real-world impact. This shift helps justify award investments and pushes agencies to align their craft with client outcomes—without losing the magic.

Recommended videos
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